The Decameron

The Decameron (/dɪˈkæmərən/; Italian: ***Decameron*** [de ˈkaːmeron, dekameˈrɔn, -ˈron] or ***Decamerone*** [dekameˈroːne]), subtitled *Prince Galehaut* (Old Italian: *Prencipe Galeotto* [ˈprentʃipe ɡaleˈɔtto, ˈprɛn-]) and sometimes nicknamed *l'Umana commedia* ("the Human comedy", as it was Boccaccio that dubbed Dante Alighieri's *Comedy* "*Divine*"), is a collection of novellas by the 14th-century Italian author Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375). The book is structured as a frame story containing 100 tales told by a group of seven young women and three young men; they shelter in a secluded villa just outside Florence in order to escape the Black Death, which was afflicting the city. Boccaccio probably conceived of *The Decameron* after the epidemic of 1348, and completed it by 1353. The various tales of love in *The Decameron* range from the erotic to the tragic. Tales of wit, practical jokes, and life lessons contribute to the mosaic. In addition to its literary value and widespread influence (for example on Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*), it provides a document of life at the time. Written in the vernacular of the Florentine language, it is considered a masterpiece of classical early Italian prose.[1]

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The Decameron

Illustration from a ca. 1492 edition of *Il Decameron* published in Venice

Author	Giovanni Boccaccio
Original title	*Decamerone*
Translator	John Payne · Richard Aldington · James McMullen Rigg · Mark Musa · Peter Bondanella · others
Country	Italy
Language	Italian (Florentine)
Genre	Frame story, novellas
Publisher	Filippo and Bernardo Giunti
Published in English	1886
OCLC	58887280 (https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/58887280)
Dewey Decimal	853.1

References to the Decameron
Boccaccio's drawings
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Title

The book's primary title exemplifies Boccaccio's fondness for Greek philology: *Decameron* combines Greek δέκα, *déka* ("ten") and ἡμέρα, *hēméra* ("day") to mean "ten-day [event]",[2] referring to the period in which the characters of the frame story tell their tales.

Boccaccio's subtitle, *Prencipe Galeotto*, refers to Galehaut, a fictional king portrayed in the Lancelot-Grail who was sometimes called by the title *haut prince* "high prince". Galehaut was a close friend of Lancelot and an enemy of King Arthur. When Galehaut learned that Lancelot loved Arthur's wife, Guinevere, he set aside his own ardor for Lancelot in order to arrange a meeting between his friend and Guinevere. At this meeting the Queen first kisses Lancelot, and so begins their love affair.

In Canto V of *Inferno*, Dante compares these fictional lovers with the real-life paramours Francesca da Rimini and Paolo Malatesta, whose relationship he fictionalises. In *Inferno*, Francesca and Paolo read of Lancelot and Guinevere, and the story impassions them to lovemaking.

Dante's description of Galehaut's munificence and savoir-faire amidst this intrigue impressed Boccaccio. By invoking the name *Prencipe Galeotto* in the alternative title to *Decameron*, Boccaccio alludes to a sentiment he expresses in the text: his compassion for women deprived of free speech and social liberty, confined to their homes and, at times, lovesick. He contrasts this life with that of the men free to enjoy hunting, fishing, riding, and falconry.[3]

Frame story

In Italy during the time of the Black Death, a group of seven young women and three young men flee from plague-ridden Florence to a deserted villa in the countryside of Fiesole for two weeks. To pass the evenings, each member of the party tells a story each night, except for one day per week for chores, and the holy days during which they do no work at all, resulting in ten nights of storytelling over the course of two weeks. Thus, by the end of the fortnight they have told 100 stories.

Miniature by Taddeo Crivelli in a manuscript of c. 1467 from Ferrara (Bodleian Library, Oxford)[4]

Each of the ten characters is charged as King or Queen of the company for one of the ten days in turn. This charge extends to choosing the theme of the stories for that day, and all but two days have topics assigned: examples of the power of fortune; examples of the power of human will; love tales that end tragically; love tales that end happily; clever replies that save the speaker; tricks that women play on men; tricks that people play on each other in general; examples of virtue. Only Dioneo, who usually tells the tenth tale each day, has the right to tell a tale on any topic he wishes, due to his wit.[5][6] Many commentators have argued that Dioneo expresses the views of Boccaccio himself.[7] Each day also includes a short introduction and conclusion to continue the frame of the tales by describing other daily activities besides story-telling. These framing interludes frequently include

transcriptions of Italian folk songs.[8] The interactions among tales in a day, or across days, as Boccaccio spins variations and reversals of previous material, forms a whole and not just a collection of stories. Recurring plots of the stories include mocking the lust and greed of the clergy; female lust and ambition on a par with male lust and ambition; tensions in Italian society between the new wealthy commercial class and noble families; and the perils and adventures of traveling merchants.

The garden of the Villa Schifanoia in Fiesole (Florence)

Analysis

Throughout the *Decameron* the mercantile ethic prevails and predominates. The commercial and urban values of quick wit, sophistication, and intelligence are treasured, while the vices of stupidity and dullness are cured, or punished. While these traits and values may seem obvious to the modern reader, they were an emerging feature in Europe with the rise of urban centers and a monetized economic system beyond the traditional rural feudal and monastery systems which placed greater value on piety and loyalty.

A Tale from the Decameron (1916) by John William Waterhouse.

Beyond the unity provided by the frame narrative, the *Decameron* provides a unity in philosophical outlook. Throughout runs the common medieval theme of Lady Fortune, and how quickly one can rise and fall through the external influences of the "Wheel of Fortune". Boccaccio had been educated in the tradition of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, which used various levels of allegory to show the connections between the literal events of the story and the Christian message. However, the *Decameron* uses Dante's model not to educate the reader but to satirize this method of learning. The Roman Catholic Church, priests, and religious belief become the satirical source of comedy throughout. This was part of a wider historical trend in the aftermath of the Black Death which saw widespread discontent with the church.

Lauretta, one of the narrators of the *Decameron*, painted by Jules Joseph Lefebvre

Many details of the *Decameron* are infused with a medieval sense of numerological and mystical significance.[9] For example, it is widely believed that the seven young women are meant to represent the Four Cardinal Virtues (Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude) and the Three Theological Virtues (Faith, Hope, and Charity). It is further supposed that the three men represent the classical Greek tripartite division of the soul (Reason, Spirit, and Appetite, see Book IV of *Republic*). Boccaccio himself notes that the names he gives for these ten characters are in fact pseudonyms chosen as "appropriate to the qualities of each". The Italian names of the seven women, in the same (most likely significant) order as given in the text, are Pampinea, Fiammetta, Filomena, Emilia, Lauretta, Neifile, and Elissa. The men, in order, are Panfilo, Filostrato, and Dioneo.

Boccaccio focused on the naturalness of sex by combining and interlacing sexual experiences with nature.

Literary sources

The Banquet in the Pine Forest (1482/3) is the third painting in Sandro Botticelli's series *The Story of Nastagio degli Onesti*, which illustrates events from the Eighth Story of the Fifth Day.

Boccaccio borrowed the plots of almost all his stories (just as later writers borrowed from him). Although he consulted only French, Italian and Latin sources, some of the tales have their origin in such far-off lands as India, the Middle East, Spain, and other places. Some were already centuries old. For example, part of the tale of Andreuccio of Perugia (Day II, Story 5) originated in 2nd-century Ephesus (in the Ephesian Tale). The frame narrative structure (though not the characters or plot) originates from the Panchatantra, which was written in Sanskrit before AD 500 and came to Boccaccio through a chain of translations that includes Old Persian, Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin. Even the description of the central motivating event of the narrative, the Black Plague (which Boccaccio surely witnessed), is not original, but is based on a description in the *Historia gentis Langobardorum* of Paul the Deacon, who lived in the 8th century. Boccaccio also drew on Ovid's works as inspiration for the Decameron.[10] He has been called "the Italian Ovid," both because of his writing as well as his relationship with Ovid.[10]

Some scholars have suggested that some of the tales for which no prior source has been found may still not have been invented by Boccaccio, but may have been circulating in the local oral tradition, of which Boccaccio availed himself. Boccaccio himself says that he heard some of the tales orally. In VII, 1, for example, he claims to have heard the tale from an old woman who heard it as a child.

The fact that Boccaccio borrowed the storylines that make up most of the *Decameron* does not mean he mechanically reproduced them. Most of the stories take place in the 14th century and have been sufficiently updated to the author's time that a reader may not know that they had been written centuries earlier or in a foreign culture. Also, Boccaccio often combined two or more unrelated tales into one (such as in II, 2 and VII, 7).

The story of Cimone and Efigenia (c. 1617), the First Story from the Fifth Day, work by Peter Paul Rubens, Frans Snyders and Jan Wildens

Moreover, many of the characters actually existed, such as Giotto di Bondone, Guido Cavalcanti, Saladin and King William II of Sicily. Scholars have even been able to verify the existence of less famous characters, such as the tricksters Bruno and Buffalmacco and their victim Calandrino. Still other fictional characters are based on real people, such as the Madonna Fiordaliso from tale II, 5, who is derived from a Madonna Flora who lived in the red light district of Naples. Boccaccio often intentionally muddled historical (II, 3) and geographical (V, 2) facts for his narrative purposes. Within the tales of *The Decameron*, the principal characters are usually developed through their dialogue and actions, so that by the end of the story they seem real and their actions logical given their context.

Another of Boccaccio's frequent techniques was to make already existing tales more complex. A clear example of this is in tale IX, 6, which was also used by Chaucer in his "The Reeve's Tale", which more closely follows the original French source than does Boccaccio's version. In the Italian version, the host's

wife and the two young male visitors occupy all three beds and she also creates an explanation of the happenings of the evening. Both elements are Boccaccio's invention and make for a more complex version than either Chaucer's version or the French source (a fabliau by Jean de Boves).

Translations into English

The Decameron's individual tales were translated into English early on (such as poet William Walter's 1525 *Here begynneth y[e] hystory of Tytus & Gesyppus translated out of Latyn into Englysshe by Wyllyam Walter, somtyme seruaunte to Syr Henry Marney*, a translation of tale X.viii), or served as source material for English authors such as Chaucer to rework. The table below lists all attempts at a complete English translation of the book. The information on pre-1971 translations is compiled from the G.H. McWilliam's introduction to his own 1971 translation.

Incomplete

Year	Translator	Omissions	Comments
1620	By "I.F.", attributed to John Florio	Omits the *Proemio* and *Conclusione dell'autore*. Replaces tale III.x with an innocuous tale taken from François de Belleforest's "Histoires tragiques", concluding that it "was commended by all the company, ... because it was free from all folly and obscoeneness." Tale IX.x is also modified, while tale V.x loses its homosexual innuendo.	"Magnificent specimen of Jacobean prose, [but] its high-handed treatment of the original text produces a number of shortcomings" says G.H. McWilliam, translator of the 1971 Penguin edition (see below). Based not on Boccaccio's Italian original, but on Antoine Le Maçon's 1545 French translation and Lionardo Salviati's 1582 Italian edition which replaced 'offensive' words, sentences or sections with asterisks or altered text (in a different font). The 1940 Heritage Press edition of this 1620 translation restores the two omitted tales by inserting anonymously translated modern English versions.
1702	Anonymous, attributed to John Savage	Omits *Proemio* and *Conclusione dell'autore*. Replaces tale III.x with the tale contained within the Introduction to the Fourth Day. Tale IX.x is bowdlerised, but possibly because the translator was working from faulty sources, rather than deliberately.	---
1741	Anonymous, posthumously identified as Dr. Charles Balguy	Omits *Proemio* and *Conclusione dell'autore*. Explicitly omits tales III.x and IX.x, and removed the homosexual innuendo in tale V.x: "Boccace is so licentious in many places, that it requires some management to preserve his wit and humour, and render him tolerably decent. This I have attempted with the loss of two novels, which I judged incapable of such treatment; and am apprehensive, it may still be thought by some people, that I have rather omitted too little, than too much."	Reissued several times with small or large modifications, sometimes without acknowledgement of the original translator. The 1804 reissue makes further expurgations. The 1822 reissue adds half-hearted renditions of III.x and IX.x, retaining the more objectionable passages in the original Italian, with a footnote to III.x that it is "impossible to render... into tolerable English", and giving Mirabeau's French translation instead. The 1872 reissue is similar, but makes translation errors in parts of IX.x. The 1895 reissue (introduced by Alfred Wallis), in four volumes, cites Mr. S. W. Orson as making up for the omissions of the 1741 original, although part of III.x is given in Antoine Le Maçon's French translation, belying the claim that it is a complete English translation, and IX.x is modified, replacing Boccaccio's direct statements with innuendo.
1855	W. K. Kelly	Omits *Proemio* and *Conclusione dell'autore*. Includes tales III.x and IX.x, claiming to be "COMPLETE, although a few passages are in French or Italian", but as in 1822, leaves parts of III.x in the original Italian with a French translation in a footnote, and omits several key sentences entirely from IX.x.	---
1896	Anonymous	Part of tale III.x again given in French, without footnote or explanation. Tale IX.x translated anew, but Boccaccio's phrase "l'umido radicale" is rendered "the	Falsely claims to be a "New Translation from the Italian" and the "First complete English Edition", when it is only a reworking of earlier versions with the addition of what McWilliam calls "vulgarly erotic overtones" in some stories.

		humid radical" rather than "the moist root".	
1903	J. M. Rigg	Once more, part of tale III.x is left in the original Italian with a footnote "No apology is needed for leaving, in accordance with precedent, the subsequent detail untranslated".	McWiliam praises its elegant style in sections of formal language, but that it is spoiled by an obsolete vocabulary in more vernacular sections. Reissued frequently, including in Everyman's Library (1930) with introduction by Edward Hutton.
1930	Frances Winwar	Omits the *Proemio*.	Introduction by Burton Rascoe. First American translation, and first English-language translation by a female. "Fairly accurate and eminently readable, [but] fails to do justice to those more ornate and rhetorical passages" says McWilliam. Originally issued in expensive 2-volume set by the Limited Editions Club of New York City, and in cheaper general circulation edition only in 1938.

Complete

Year	Translator	Publishers and Comments
1886	John Payne	The first truly complete translation in English, with copious footnotes to explain Boccaccio's double-entendres and other references. Introduction by Sir Walter Raleigh. Published by the Villon Society by private subscription for private circulation. Stands and falls on its "splendidly scrupulous but curiously archaic... sonorous and self-conscious Pre-Raphaelite vocabulary" according to McWilliam, who gives as an example from tale III.x: "Certes, father mine, this same devil must be an ill thing and an enemy in very deed of God, for that it irketh hell itself, let be otherwhat, when he is put back therein." 1925 Edition by Horace Liveright Inc. US, then reprinted in Oct 1928, Dec 1928, April 1929, Sept 1929, Feb 1930. 1930. Reissued in the Modern Library, 1931. Updated editions have been published in 1982, edited by Charles S. Singleton, and in 2004, edited by Cormac Ó Cuilleanáin.
1930	Richard Aldington	Like Winwar, first issued in expensive and lavishly illustrated edition. "Littered with schoolboy errors... plain and threadbare, so that anyone reading it might be forgiven for thinking that Boccaccio was a kind of sub-standard fourteenth-century Somerset Maugham" say McWilliam.
1972, 1995	George Henry McWilliam	The first translation into contemporary English, intended for general circulation. Penguin Classics edition. The second edition (1995) includes a 150-page detailed explanation of the historical, linguistic, and nuanced reasoning behind the new translation. Its in-depth study exemplifies the care and consideration given to the original text and meaning. The volume includes a biography of the author and a detailed history of the book's composition and setting.
1977	Peter Bondanella and Mark Musa	W. W. Norton & Company
1993	Guido Waldman	Oxford University Press.
2008	J. G. Nichols	Everyman's Library.and Vintage Classics
2013	Wayne A. Rebhorn	W. W. Norton & Company. *Publishers Weekly* called Rebhorn's translation "strikingly modern" and praised its "accessibility".[11] In an interview with *The Wall Street Journal* Rebhorn stated that he started translating the work in 2006 after deciding that the translations he was using in his classroom needed improvement. Rebhorn cited errors in the 1977 translation as one of the reasons for the new translation. Peter Bondanella, one of the translators of the 1977 edition, stated that new translations build on previous ones and that the error cited would be corrected in future editions of his translation.[12]

Table of cities and characters mentioned in the English text in order of days and Novels

Story (Day, Story)	Narrator	Locations	Main Characters or Other People Mentioned
Day 1, 1	Panfilo	Prato	Ser Capparello ofi Prato, friar, and Musciatto Franzesi[13]
Day 1, 2	Neifile	Rome and Paris	Jehannot de Chevigny[13]
Day 1, 3	Filomena	Alexandria	Saladin, Sultan of Egypt[13]
Day 1, 4	Dioneo	Lunigiana	A Benedictine monk, A Young Girl, An Abbot, Jehannot of Chauvigny Jehannot de Chevigny and Melchizedek (mentioned in passing)[13]
Day 1, 5	Fiammetta	Montferrat, Genoa	The Marchioness and the Marquis of Monferrat, King of France[13]
Day 1, 6	Emilia	Florence	A friar minor, inquisitor of St. John Goldenbeard, a good man with more money than sense, and Galen[13]
Day 1, 7	Filostrato	Scala, Cluny, Paris, Verona	Cangrande I della Scala, Bergamino, Emperor Frederick II, Primasso, Abbot of Cluny[13]
Day 1, 8	Lauretta	Genoa	Guglielmo Borsiere and Ermino de' Grimaldi[13]
Day 1, 9	Elissa	Gascony and Cyprus	King of Cyprus[13]
Day 1, 10	Pampinea	Bologna	Alberto of Bologna[13]
Day 2, 1	Neifile	Treviso	Martellino, St. Arrigo[13]
Day 2, 2	Filostrato	Bologna and Castelguglielmo	Rinaldo of Asti (Marquis Azzo of Ferrara)[13]
Day 2, 3	Pampinea	Florence, London, Bruges, Rome, Paris, Cornwall	Messer Tebaldo, Lamberto, Agolante, Alessandro[13]
Day 2, 4	Lauretta	Amalfi Coast, Ravello, Cyprus, Aegean Sea, Cephalonia, Corfu, Brindisi	Landolfo Rufolo, Turkish Pirates, A good woman from Corfu[13]
Day 2,5	Fiammetta	Perugia, Naples, Palermo	Andreuccio of Perugia, A young Sicilian woman, Pietro, Filippo Minutolo
Day 2,6	Emilia	Naples, Ponza, Genoa, Magra River	Madam Beritola Caracciolo, Guiffredi, Corrado, Messer Gasparino Doria
Day 2, 7	Panfilo	Alexandria, Sardinia, Majorca, Corinth, Athens, Chios, Smyrna, Rhodes, Paphos, Aigues-Mortes, Crete, Cyprus	Beminedab the Sultan of Babylon, King of the Algarve, Pericon of Visalgo, a servant, ladies, Marato, Duke of Athens, Prince of Morea, Ciuriaci the servant, Constantine, Constantine's son, Constantine's nephew Manuel, Uzbek King of the Turks, Antiochus the servant of Uzbek, Basanus King of Cappadocia, Antigonus of Famagusta the businessman, King of Cyprus, Alatiel the Sultan's daughter, King of Algarve
Day 2, 8	Elissa	Paris, London	

Day 2, 9	Filomena	Alexandria, Paris, Genoa	Bernabò Lomellin, Ambrogiuolo da Piacenza, Madam Zinevra, the Sultan
Day 2, 10	Dioneo	Monaco, Pisa	
Day 3, 1	Filostrato	Lamporecchio	
Day 3, 2	Pampinea	Pavia	
Day 3, 3	Filomena	Florence	
Day 3, 4	Panfilo	Florence	
Day 3, 5	Elissa	Pistoia	
Day 3, 6	Fiammetta	Naples	
Day 3, 7	Emilia	Florence	
Day 3, 8	Lauretta	Tuscany	
Day 3, 9	Neifile	Florence, Narbonne, Roussillon	Gillette of Narbonne, Count of Roussillon, Master Gerard of Narbonne
Day 3, 10	Dioneo	Gafsa	
Day 4, 1	Fiammetta	Salerno	
Day 4, 2	Pampinea	Imola, Venice	
Day 4, 3	Lauretta	Crete, Marseilles	
Day 4, 4	Elissa	Sicily, Tunisia, Granada, Ustica, Trapani	
Day 4, 5	Filomena	Messina, Naples	
Day 4, 6	Panfilo	Brescia	
Day 4, 7	Emilia	Florence	
Day 4, 8	Neifile	Paris, Florence	Girolamo, Salvestra
Day 4, 9	Filostrato	Roussillon, Provence	Messer Guillame of Roussillon, Guillaume of Capestang, Count of Provence
Day 4, 10	Dioneo	Provence	
Day 5, 1	Panfilo	Crete, Rhodes, Cyprus	Aristippo, Galeso/Cimone, Efigenia, Cipseo, Pasimunda, Cassandrea, Ormisda, Lisimaco
Day	Emilia	Lipari Islands,	

5, 2		Susa (Sousse), Tunis	
Day 5, 3	Elissa	Rome, Anagni	Pietro Boccamazza, Agnolella, Gigliozzo Saullo
Day 5, 4	Filostrato	Romagna	Messer Lizio of Valbona, Ricciardo Manardi, Giacomina
Day 5, 5	Neifile	Fano, Faenza	Guidotto of Cremona, Giacomino of Pavia, Giannole di Severino, Minghino de Mingole
Day 5, 6	Pampinea	Ischia, Procida, Scalea, Cape Minerva La Cuba	Gianni of Procida, King Frederick, Ruggeria of Lauria
Day 5, 7	Lauretta	Sicily, Ayas	Messer Amerigo Abate of Trapini, Messer Corrado, Violante, Teodoro, Phineas
Day 5, 8	Filomena	Ravenna, Classe, ancient port of Ravenna	
Day 5, 9	Fiammetta	Florence	Federigo degli Alberighi, Coppo di Borghese Domenichi
Day 5, 10	Dioneo	Perugia	
Day 6, 1	Filomena	Florence	Madonna Oretta, a Knight
Day 6, 2	Pampinea	Florence	Messer Geri Spina, Cisti the Baker
Day 6, 3	Lauretta	Florence	Monna Nonna de' Pulci, Bishop of Florence
Day 6, 4	Neifile	Peretola	Currado Gianfigliazzi, Chichibio the cook
Day 6, 5	Panfilo	Mugello	Messer Forese da Rabatta and Master Giotto the painter
Day 6, 6	Fiammetta	Montughi	Michele Scalza, Neri Vannini, Piero di Fiorentino, Baronci family
Day 6, 7	Filostrato	Prato	
Day 6, 8	Emilia	Florence	
Day 6, 9	Elissa	Florence	
Day 6, 10	Dioneo	Certaldo	
Day 7, 1	Emilia	Certaldo	
Day 7, 2	Filostrato	Naples	
Day 7, 3	Elissa	Siena	
Day 7, 4	Lauretta	Arezzo	
Day	Fiammetta	Rimini	

7, 5			
Day 7, 6	Pampinea	Florence	
Day 7, 7	Filomena	Bologna	
Day 7, 8	Neifile	Florence	
Day 7, 9	Panfilo	Argos	
Day 7, 10	Dioneo	Siena	
Day 8, 1	Neifile	Milan, Genoa	
Day 8, 2	Panfilo	Varlungo	
Day 8, 3	Elissa	Florence (Mugnone Valley)	
Day 8, 4	Emilia	Fiesole	
Day 8, 5	Filostrato	Florence	
Day 8, 6	Filomena	Florence	
Day 8, 7	Pampinea	Florence	
Day 8, 8	Fiammetta	Siena	
Day 8, 9	Lauretta	Florence, Bologna	
Day 8, 10	Dioneo	Palermo, Naples	
Day 9, 1	Filomena	Pistoia	Rinuccio Palermini, Alessandro Chiarmontesi, Francesca de' Lazzari, Scannadio, Francesca de' Lazzari's maid, the Watch
Day 9, 2	Elissa	Lombardy	Isabetta, Abbess Madonna Usimbalda
Day 9, 3	Filostrato	Florence, Mercato Vecchio	Calandrino, Bruno, Buffalmacco, Nello, Master Simone da Villa (aka Scimmione/Master Simonkey), Tessa
Day 9, 4	Neifile	Siena, Marche, Buonconvento	Francesco/Cecco son of Messer Angiulieri, Francesco/Cecco son of Messer Fortarrigo
Day 9, 5	Fiammetta	Camerata, Florence	Camerata is, or was, a village just north of Florence on the road to Fiesole.[14] Calandrino, Niccolo Cornacchini and son Filippo, Bruno, Buffalmacco, Niccolosa, Mangione, Nello, Tessa
Day 9, 6	Panfilo	Florence, Mugnone	Adriano, Pinuccio
Day 9, 7	Pampinea	Florence	Talano of Imola
Day 9, 8	Lauretta	Florence	Ciacco, Biondello, Messer Corso, Filippo Argenti
Day	Emilia	Ayas,	Melisuss, Solomon, Joseph

9, 9		Jerusalem, Goosebridge	
Day 9, 10	Dioneo	Barletta, Apulia, Bitonto	Don Guanni of Barolo, Pietro, Pietro's wife, Zita Carapresa di Guidice Leo
Day 10, 1	Neifile	Florence, Spain	Messer Ruggieri de' Figiovanni, Alfonso of Spain
Day 10, 2	Elissa	Siena	
Day 10, 3	Filostrato	Cathay	
Day 10, 4	Lauretta	Bologna	
Day 10, 5	Emilia	Udine	
Day 10, 6	Fiammetta	Castellammare di Stabia	
Day 10, 7	Pampinea	Palermo	
Day 10, 8	Filomena	Rome, Athens	
Day 10, 9	Panfilo	Pavia, Alexandria, Digne	
Day 10, 10	Dioneo	Saluzzo	

Notable early translations

It can be generally said that Petrarch's version in *Rerum senilium libri* XVII, 3, included in a letter he wrote to his friend Boccaccio, was to serve as a source for all the many versions that circulated around Europe, including the translations of the very *Decameron* into Catalan (first recorded translation into a foreign language, anonymous, hand-written in Sant Cugat in 1429. It was later retranslated by Bernat Metge), French and Spanish.

The famous first tale (I, 1) of the notorious Ser Ciappelletto was later translated into Latin by Olimpia Fulvia Morata and translated again by Voltaire.

Adaptations

Theatre

- William Shakespeare's 1605 play *All's Well That Ends Well* is based on tale III, 9. Shakespeare probably first read a French translation of the tale in William Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*.
- Posthumus's wager on Imogen's chastity in *Cymbeline* was taken by Shakespeare from an English translation of a 15th-century German tale, "Frederyke of Jennen", whose basic plot came from tale II, 9.
- Lope de Vega adapted at least twelve stories from the *Decameron* for the theatre, including:

    - *El ejemplo de casadas y prueba de la paciencia*, based on tale X, 10, which was by far the most popular story of the *Decameron* during the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries
    - *Discreta enamorada*, based on tale III, 3
    - *El ruiseñor de Sevilla* (*They're Not All Nightingales*), based on parts of V, 4
- Molière's 1661 play *L'école des maris* is based on tale III, 3.
- Molière borrowed from tale VII, 4 in his play *George Dandin ou le Mari confondu* (*The Confounded Husband*). In both stories the husband is convinced that he has accidentally caused his wife's suicide.
- Thomas Middleton's play *The Widow* is based on tales II, 2 and III, 3.
- The ring parable from tale I, 3 is at the heart of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's 1779 play *Nathan the Wise*.[15]
- Alfred, Lord Tennyson used tale V, 9 for his 1879 play *The Falcon*.

A 1620 edition of *The Decameron*, printed by Isaac Jaggard

Prose works

- The tale of patient Griselda (X, 10) was the source of Chaucer's "The Clerk's Tale". However, there are some scholars who believe that Chaucer may not have been directly familiar with *The Decameron,* and instead derived it from a Latin translation/retelling of that tale by Petrarch.
- Martin Luther retells tale I, 2, in which a Jew converts to Catholicism after visiting Rome and seeing the corruption of the Catholic hierarchy. However, in Luther's version (found in his "Table-talk #1899"), Luther and Philipp Melanchthon try to dissuade the Jew from visiting Rome.
- The story of Griselda (X, 10) was also the basis for the 1694 verse novel *Griseldis* by Charles Perrault, later included in his 1697 collection *Histoires ou contes du temps passé*.
- Jonathan Swift used tale I, 3 for his first major published work, *A Tale of a Tub* (1704).

Poems

- John Keats borrowed the tale of Lisabetta and her pot of basil (IV, 5) for his poem, *Isabella, or the Pot of Basil*.
- At his death Percy Bysshe Shelley had left a fragment of a poem entitled "Ginevra", which he took from the first volume of an Italian book called *L'Osservatore Fiorentino*. The plot of that book was in turn taken from tale X, 4.
- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow adapted tale V, 9 for the poem "The Falcon of Ser Federigo", included in his 1863 collection *Tales of a Wayside Inn*.

Songs

- Tale IV, 1 was the basis for Child ballad 269, "Lady Diamond".[16]

Opera

- The Venetian writer Apostolo Zeno wrote a libretto named *Griselda* in 1701, based in part on tale X, 10, and in part on Lope de Vega's theatrical adaptation of it, *El ejemplo de casadas y prueba de la paciencia*. Various composers wrote music for the libretto, including Carlo Francesco Pollarolo (*Griselda*, 1701), Tomaso Albinoni (*Griselda*, 1703), Antonio Maria Bononcini (*Griselda*, 1718), Alessandro Scarlatti (*Griselda*, 1721), Giovanni Bononcini (*Griselda*, 1722) and Antonio Vivaldi (*Griselda*, 1735).
- Giuseppe Petrosinelli in his libretto for Domenico Cimarosa's comic opera *The Italian Girl in London* uses the story of the heliotrope (bloodstone) in tale VIII, 3.

Film and television

- *Decameron Nights* (1924) was based on three of the tales.
- *Decameron Nights* (1953) was based on three of the tales and starred Louis Jourdan as Boccaccio.
- *Archandel Gabriel a paní Husa (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt00309297/)* (Archangel Gabriel and Madam Goose) by Jiří Trnka (1965) is an animated puppet film based on a story from Decameron (IV, 2)
- Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The Decameron* (1971) is an anthology film which includes nine of the stories.
- The 2007 film *Virgin Territory* is a romantic comedy based on the framing story of *The Decameron*.
- The 2015 film *Wondrous Boccaccio* is loosely based on four of the tales.
- The 2017 comedy *The Little Hours* adapted tales III, 1 and III, 2.

Wrongly considered to be adaptations

- Chaucer's "The Franklin's Tale" shares its plot with tale X, 5, although this is not due to a direct borrowing from Boccaccio. Rather, both authors used a common French source.
- The motif of the three trunks in *The Merchant of Venice* by Shakespeare is found in tale X, 1. However, both Shakespeare and Boccaccio probably came upon the tale in *Gesta Romanorum*.

Collections emulating the Decameron

- Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron* is heavily based on *The Decameron*.
- Christoph Martin Wieland's set of six novellas, *Das Hexameron von Rosenhain*, is based on the structure of *The Decameron*.
- In 2020 State Theatre Company of South Australia and ActNow Theatre created a project called *Decameron 2.0* in response to the COVID-19 crisis, which involved 10 writers creating 10 stories each over 10 weeks, loosely connected to themes in the Decameron.[17]
- Also in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the July 12, 2020 issue of *The New York Times Magazine* featured a short story collection entitled The Decameron Project,[18] with new writings from contemporary authors including Margaret Atwood, and illustrations by Sophy Hollington and other artists.

References to the Decameron

- Christine de Pizan refers to several of the stories from *The Decameron* in her work *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1405).
- The title character in George Eliot's historical novel *Romola* emulates Gostanza in tale V, 2, by buying a small boat and drifting out to sea to die, after she realizes that she no longer has anyone on whom she can depend.
- Reference to The Decameron by Miss Lavish in *A room with a view* by E M Forester (1908).
- In the 1994 movie *My Summer Story*, Ralphie does a book report on *The Decameron* and gets in trouble with his teacher for doing so.
- The tales are referenced in *The Borgias* in season 2, episode 7, when a fictional version of Niccolò Machiavelli mentions at a depiction of the *Bonfire of the Vanities* that he should have brought his friend "the Decameron" who would have told the "one-hundred and first" tale.
- Season 1, episode 5 (2013) of the American TV series *Da Vinci's Demons* portrays a theatrical adaptation of stories from *The Decameron*.
- Inspectors find a pocket edition of *The Decameron* on the body of a dead man in the Sherlock Holmes story *A Study in Scarlet*.

Boccaccio's drawings

Since *The Decameron* was very popular among contemporaries, especially merchants, many manuscripts of it survive. The Italian philologist Vittore Branca did a comprehensive survey of them and identified a few copied under Boccaccio's supervision; some have notes written in Boccaccio's hand. Two in particular have elaborate drawings, probably done by Boccaccio himself. Since these manuscripts were widely circulated, Branca thought that they influenced all subsequent illustrations. In 1962 Branca identified Codex Hamilton 90, in Berlin's Staatsbibliothek, as an autograph belonging to Boccaccio's latter years.[19]

See also

- *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*
- *One Thousand and One Nights*
- *The Masque of the Red Death*
- *The Plague* (novel)

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External links

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